

# Healthcare Implementation of a Cell Phone-Based Pediatric Social Care Screener and Social Work Intervention Protocol

## **Abstract**

### **Background**

Pediatric social determinants of health (SDOH) interventions are now common yet lack widespread workflow integration across diverse clinical settings.

### **Objective**

To design and implement a workflow adaptable organization-wide SDOH digital screening and intervention protocol.

### **Methods**

We interviewed nine clinical directors in our institution, representing general and specialty pediatrics in outpatient and inpatient settings – including social workers, nurses, and physicians – and two national experts in SDOH interventions from outside institutions. We reviewed existing family SDOH needs assessment data and workflow processes with our department of social work. We phased in a cell phone-based screener of eight common SDOH domains, beginning in the emergency department (ED) and general pediatric mobile clinic, followed by outpatient pulmonology and endocrinology, and inpatient wards. Each site determined their optimum workflow integration of the tool based on staffing and resources. We used descriptive statistics to report our findings.

### **Results**

Based on interviews, systemic pitfalls were 1) inconsistent reporting of social needs through a myriad of disparate SDOH screening mechanisms; 2) underutilization of collected SDOH data; 3) duplicative and siloed interventional design; 4) poor tracking of SDOH data for clinical use; and 5) inadequacies in intervention. A total of 187 families self-screened using the novel tool, with the majority (68%) accessing it in the mobile clinic. Thirty (16%) indicated urgent need, 26 (14%) non-urgent need, and 129 (70%) no need. Of those with urgent need, trouble paying bills, food insecurity, and a family member with mental health issues were most common. In this group, 73% completed a phone-based social work intervention within three days of screening. Most families rated high comfort (77%) and ease (96%) with screener completion.

### **Conclusion**

We demonstrate a collaborative approach to developing and implementing a workflow adaptable SDOH screening and intervention model across our healthcare enterprise that responds to common barriers of implementation.